

January 22, 2004

A weekly e-newsletter for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant team

The Big Story



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> **WIPP Shipments** (as of 1/22/04 at 7:22 a.m.

Shipments scheduled to arrive at WIPP this week 22

Total shipments received at WIPP 2287

WIPP welcomes Paul Detwiler, new CBFO acting manager

WIPP is pleased to welcome new Carlsbad Field Office Acting Manager R. Paul Detwiler. Detwiler comes to WIPP from the DOE General Counsel's office in Washington, D.C., and though his name may not be familiar to all WIPP employees, his connection to WIPP spans many years. The new acting manager has worked closely on key WIPP issues throughout his DOE career and is well-versed on project compliance and operations. Detwiler was instrumental in EPA's initial certification of WIPP in 1998. He successfully defended litigation seeking to prevent the site's opening and was closely involved in the proceedings leading to NMED's issuance of the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit.

Detwiler's close association with WIPP brings focus to plans for leading project operations. He states, "My first priority is the same as former Secretary of Energy and current Governor of New Mexico Bill Richardson's: WIPP's primary mission is, and will continue to be, safety."

WIPP recertification by EPA, the receipt of remote-handled TRU waste and increased shipment rates top Detwiler's short list for important project objectives. He notes that one of the project's greatest opportunities lies in continued improvement to the waste characterization program.

Detwiler graduated in 1977 from Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, with a degree in biology. After completing coursework at Cornell University in 1982, he moved to Washington, D.C., to attend George Washington University's law school at night while completing his doctoral dissertation. In 1986, he received both his Ph.D. in ecology from Cornell University and his J.D. from George Washington University.

Lloyd Piper, who was serving as DOE acting manager and deputy manager, will continue his duties as deputy manager of the Carlsbad Field Office.

In the news



Section 311 **Impacts**



Safe Parking



Not just any waste





nuggets



Our Team News



Characterization News

CBFO submits permit modification request to implement new law requirements

TRU TeamWorks (TTW) continues its series on the impacts of Section 311 of Public Law (Pub. L.) 108-137. Signed into law December, Section 311 directs WIPP to submit a permit modification request to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to change TRU waste confirmation requirements and to demonstrate compliance with the disposal room performance standards.

WIPP, in keeping with Section 311, submitted the Class 3 permit modification request to NMED on January 12. The modification proposes changes to the WAP that would:

- Confirm that waste contains no ignitable, corrosive or reactive waste through the use of either radiography or visual examination
- Require review of the waste stream profile form to ensure that there are no ignitable, corrosive or reactive wastes and that only wastes with approved hazardous waste numbers are shipped to WIPP.
- Eliminate three confirmation activities headspace gas sampling and analysis; solids sampling and analysis; and visual examination as a quality control check on radiography
- Define characterization as:
 - Providing the hazardous waste determination in accordance with each site's state requirements
 - Reporting the material parameter weights of the waste
 - Verifying the absence of prohibited items
- Monitor the underground disposal rooms for volatile organic compounds, and establish predetermined action levels



What's WAP?

The Waste Analysis Plan (WAP) is an attachment to the hazardous waste facility permit which describes the analysis methods used by generator sites to prove their waste complies with the permit requirements. The WAP provides the information necessary to safely manage, store and dispose TRU mixed waste at WIPP. Generator sites must implement applicable requirements of the WAP before they can ship waste to WIPP.

The permit modification request is mandated by the new law, but the changes reflect improvements in the waste confirmation process gained after years of operational experience and the handling of more than 50,000 waste containers. "If approved by NMED, these changes will save taxpayers close to a billion dollars over the life of the project," notes Roger Nelson, CBFO chief scientist. "This savings will be gained without affecting the safety of WIPP operations, human health or the environment."

There will be a 60-day public comment period on the modification request that began January 15. In February, DOE and WTS will conduct public meetings in Santa Fe and Carlsbad to provide information on the requested changes. The 60-day public comment period ends on March 15.



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Transportation News



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WIPP Shipments (as of 1/22/04 at 7:22 a.m.)

Shipments scheduled to arrive at WIPP this week 22

Total shipments received at WIPP 2,287

Total Waste Disposed Underground at **WIPP**

> CH drums 47,950

CH standard waste boxes 2,408

CH ten-drum overpacks 627

Cubic meters 17,418

Safe parking

WIPP drivers stop briefly en route to fill their tanks, perform walk-around inspections, or to take needed "stretch" breaks at rest stops. On occasion, drivers may be required to stop for longer periods of time due to bad weather, mechanical problems, hazardous road conditions or other unanticipated problems. When problems arise that suspend WIPP shipments, drivers follow specific guidelines.

First they will notify the CMR. The CMR, in turn, notifies officials in the state where the



truck is located and together they decide on a "safe parking" location. A "safe parking" location is a predetermined parking area that has been agreed upon by the affected state and DOE.

According to the August 2002 Program Implementation Guide provided by the Western Governors' Association, the three primary "safe parking" choices are:

DOE and Department of Defense facilities are preferred. This allows for the truck First choice to be safely parked and secured. Because these facilities are not always

accessible, or the truck may be unable to safely reach one of these facilities,

alternate choices have been identified.

Each state has provided DOE with a list of acceptable "safe parking" locations. Second choice when "first choice" parking cannot be safely reached. Examples are ports-of-entry and similar locations. When it is not possible for the drivers to safely reach one of

these, a third choice is given.

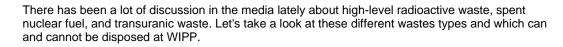
Third In this situation, the CMR, in conjunction with the affected state and WIPP driver, choice

will select the most suitable location for the truck to stop.

While preferred parking locations have been identified in all states along WIPP shipping corridors, the driver must be able to safely reach them. To ensure WIPP shipment safety, national weather conditions are monitored 24 hours a day at the WIPP site CMR. Advance notice gives drivers time to locate and reach a safe parking location in the event one is needed.

Disposal News

It's not just any waste, it's TRU



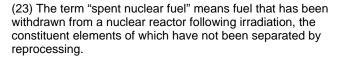
Let's start out with what *can* be disposed at WIPP. That, as WIPP employees know, is defense-generated **transuranic** (TRU) waste. The WIPP Land Withdrawal Act defines TRU waste as:

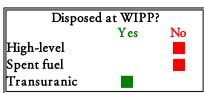
18) TRANSURANIC WASTE: The term "transuranic waste" means waste containing more than 100 nanocuries of alpha-emitting transuranic isotopes per gram of waste, with half-lives greater than 20 years, except for: (A) high-level radioactive waste; (B) waste that the Secretary has determined, with the concurrence of the Administrator, does not need the degree of isolation required by the disposal regulations; or (C) waste that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved for disposal on a case-by-case basis in accordance with part 61 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations.

The WIPP Land Withdrawal Act specifically <u>bans the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level</u> <u>radioactive waste at WIPP</u>. The LWA defines these two waste types as follows:

- (15) SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL: The term "spent nuclear fuel" has the meaning given such term in section 2(23) of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (42 U.S.C. 10101(23).
- (10) HIGH-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE: The term "high-level radioactive waste" has the meaning given such term in section 2(12) of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (42 U.S: . 10101(12).

The Nuclear Waste Policy act of 1982 defines spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste:





(12) The term "high-level radioactive waste" means—(A) the highly radioactive material resulting from the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, including liquid waste produced directly in reprocessing and any solid material derived from liquid waste that contains fission products in sufficient concentrations; and (B) other highly radioactive material that the Commission, consistent with existing law, determines by rule requires permanent isolation.

Next week we will look at the differences between TRU waste and low-level waste.



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Safety News

Safety at the pump – lessons learned



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While workplace safety is the regular focus of *TRU TeamWorks*, one WIPP employee recently had a terrifying experience while filling his personal vehicle's tank at a downtown gas station. He asked that we share his near tragic "lessons learned" so that others will exercise caution every time they pull up to the pump. Here is his story:

"I was filling my tank. Everything was going as usual until I began to 'top off the tank' after the pump had automatically shut off. Immediately after placing my hand on the pump nozzle – while watching the meter on the pump – I began to feel my hand getting warm. Looking down, I realized that my hand was engulfed in a small ball of fire along with the nozzle and the fuel port on the vehicle."

'' ... my hand was engulfed in a small ball of fire ... ''

By the time this lucky individual realized what was happening, the fire had gone out and he quickly replaced the cap on the fuel port to smother any remaining fire or fumes.

Know the facts

Fire can occur before, during or immediately after the gas cap is removed and before fueling begins. Static fires can and do cause serious injuries, not to mention vehicle and fuel station damage.



People often re-enter their vehicles after they begin the fueling process to stay warm or to stay out of the heat. The victim said he forgot to ground himself to the vehicle after getting back out of his car. The result was a static charge of electricity that ignited a small cloud of gasoline vapor around his hand, the fuel nozzle and fuel port.

If you must re-enter your vehicle, ground yourself to the vehicle before you begin the fueling process. This can be done by touching the body of your vehicle before removing the gas cap and before inserting or removing the fuel nozzle from your vehicle.

Three Rules for Safe Refueling

While filling up...

Turn Off Engine

Don't Smoke

Never Re-enter Your Vehicle



Left: Static fire destroys Tucson man's car. Photo as shown in the Electrostatic Discharge Association Journal.

Static fires at the gas pump are not urban legend. The hazards are real. Be vigilant when filling your gas tank and heed all caution signs at the pump. For additional safety information, visit The Petroleum Equipment Institute on-line at http://www.pei.org, then click on the "Stop Static" icon.



Working Smart

Great Q&As polish good presentations into diamonds



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When question-and-answer (Q&A) time is just standard operating procedure to close your talk, the audience may assume you have no further interest in them. THE END. Consider, instead, a rousing finale with a well-tuned Q&A session..

The Law Library Resource Xchange offers savvy suggestions. Weave questions throughout your presentation -- in analysis, objectives, design, delivery and evaluation phases. Engage the audience before, during and after your talk with questions to stimulate interest, prompt feedback, make facts memorable, build interaction or inject humor to re-energize both audience and



presenter. For example: "What will be the total volume of VOCs in the WIPP repository when it is filled? Today, I would like to discuss this and other information about the constituents of TRU waste emplaced in the WIPP repository."

Before

- **Do a sample Q&A** with selected audience members beforehand to learn their range of knowledge, vocabulary, questions and concerns about your subject. Structure your presentation to match that profile.
- Anticipate. You can anticipate 80 to 90 percent of questions. Feed your Q&A; omit a couple of pertinent details in the talk. Prepare answers ahead of time for all controversial questions you hope you won't be asked!
- **Prompt the first question** from a <u>known</u> audience member. Or begin the Q&A with frequently asked questions; answer those of interest to your audience. Announce that you are available after the close.
- Three-part answers: Practice treating each question in three parts: (a) question, (b) answer and (c) bridge (connects question to your topic). Sample question: "Do you dispose of high-level waste in the WIPP repository?" Answer: "No, the WIPP LWA specifically prohibits the disposal of high-level waste at WIPP. Bridge: "That is a great question, because it leads right into what I want to discuss with you today, provisions of the WIPP LWA."

During:

- Start by asking for questions the audience wants you to answer. Write those on a flip chart or chalkboard. Cross each off as you answer them during your talk. Announce that you will answer remaining questions during Q&A.
- With smaller groups, invite questions during your presentation. Announce that as you begin, but answer succinctly to preserve the flow of your talk and respect time limits. Involved questions can be completely answered during Q&A. With larger audiences, give out question/comment cards that you or an assistant organize and answer questions after a break or during Q&A.
- Repeat each question for large groups, but direct your answer to everyone. For complex questions, confirm with the inquiring person that you understood his/her question before you answer

After:

- No packing: Don't ask for feedback and promptly begin to pack up! Give Q&A your complete attention.
- Close the Q&A by summarizing key points from your presentation and subsequent audience discussion. Provide information so audience members may contact you with further questions or requests.
- -- Adapted from Law Library Resource Xchange, LLC (www.llrx.com)
- -- Excerpts from author Marie Wallace, career law librarian, presenter and recipient of the American Association of Law Librarians' highest service award.

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Suggs appointed security manager

Craig Suggs has been appointed the new WTS Security manager effective February 1, 2004. In this position, Suggs will be responsible for all aspects of Physical and Employee Security.

Suggs brings years of management and professional experience to the position, including more than 15 years at WIPP. He holds a bachelors degree in criminal justice. Suggs reports to John J. Garcia



Laptop computer inventory

To improve accountability for laptop computers, Property Management will conduct random searches for laptops that belong to the WIPP Project each month. The scheduled annual inventory will begin April 1.

A new random list will be generated the first of each month. You will be notified if your name is on the list so that you will have time to bring your laptop to work.



Questions concerning this announcement should be directed to Property Management at 234-3280.